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Policies and Procedures Minutes 08/01/2007

*Arlington School Committee
Policies and Procedures Subcommittee
Wednesday, August 1, 2007
4 PM*

Members present:

Ron Spangler, Chair
Jeff Thielman
Sean Garballey
Nate Levenson, Superintendent
Sue Mazzarella, CFO

The meeting was called to order at 4:08 pm.

1. Approval of Minutes, July 9, 2007

On a motion by Mr. Garballey, seconded by Mr. Spangler, the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

2. Policy BEDH: *Public Participation at School Committee Meetings*

Mr. Spangler presented draft amendments to Policy BEDH (attached as Exhibit A). Mr. Garballey moved to recommend to the full committee. A discussion ensued on the pros and cons of allowing committee members to respond to public comment during public participation. Mr. Levenson said it was routine for meetings in Boxford to include an hour of participation when structured thusly. Mr. Spangler reminded all that Mr. Garballey's scan of like policies in surrounding districts showed no other community denying committee members the ability to respond. Mr. Garballey said the chair still has power to limit the duration of public participation. Mr. Thielman explained why Arlington had done away with committee response in the first place, to enable meetings to be more productive, but said he'd still vote for this change. Mr. Spangler commented that if citizens feel it's important that they be heard, then the committee should make it a priority.

Mr. Thielman asked if Mr. Spangler had discussed the potential change with Ms. Lovelace. Mr. Spangler said no, but offered to table the motion so that this could happen. Mr. Garballey withdrew his motion.

3. Policy BDB: *School Committee Officers*

Mr. Spangler presented draft amendments to Policy BDB (attached as Exhibit B). Mr. Garballey and Mr. Thielman were approving of the changes, but as Mr. Spangler had also not discussed these with Ms. Lovelace, adoption was deferred to the next meeting.

4. Policy DBJ: *Budget Transfer Authority*

Policy requires, in part, a prioritized list of programs/positions to be reinstated if projected operating budget surpluses are identified. Mr. Thielman says this has only been done once, in Mrs. Donovan's last year. Mr. Levenson agrees with the intent of the policy – to keep the committee fully in the loop on program changes – but does not think DBJ as written is the way to do this. He believes other parts of Policy DBJ that deal with budget transfer authority already limit Superintendent's ability to unilaterally add or remove programs. Mr. Levenson said a priority list would further complicate the budgeting process, and that painful program cuts are more palatable when all are "equally bad." Mr. Thielman said there remains a need to discuss priorities, maybe within the Budget subcommittee. Mr. Levenson agreed, but suggested that this discussion should take place after new revenue is identified, not beforehand as DBJ currently requires.

Mr. Thielman will draft an amended policy DBJ for consideration at the next subcommittee meeting.

5. Policy DI: *Fiscal Accounting and Reporting*

Subcommittee, Superintendent, and CFO discussed compliance with Policy DI. Mr. Spangler said monthly financial reports were not being provided as policy requires, and that the reports he had seen did not include expenditures against grants and other revenue, also as required by policy. The Superintendent apologized for not providing reports as required, and will correct this oversight. At issue is a lack of staff in the CFOs office with ability to transfer data from MUNIS to Excel and run the report in Excel. Ms. Mazzarella said information on grants and other revenue could be provided as a separate report, but that it will take some time to link this information with the report on the operating budget, possibly until FY09. Grants are not currently tracked in MUNIS, and Ms. Mazzarella is working on changing this as time permits.

6. Online policy manual

Mr. Spangler expressed concern that the current online manual is difficult to navigate and search. He described the MASC's new online policy service, currently used by 10 districts. Ms. Mazzarella knew of this service, and spoke highly of it based on her experiences in Lynnfield (one of the 10). Mr. Spangler will contact MASC for details, including cost.

7. Policy calendar

Subcommittee reviewed the policy calendar provided by Mr. Thielman. The calendar captures all the administration and School Committee actions required by policy during the year. Mr. Thielman said Ms. Fitzgerald is currently doing a bottom-up review of all policies with the intent of creating something similar, at the request of Ms. Lovelace. Mr. Spangler asked if this subcommittee's review of the calendar was therefore duplication of effort. Mr. Thielman felt it was a useful exercise nonetheless.

Notes from subcommittee review of calendar are found in Exhibit C, attached.

Mr. Spangler suggested that the calendar be formally adopted as standard procedure, and annual review of it be added to the district policies. There was general agreement, with Mr. Thielman suggesting doing so by amending Policy BGC. Mr. Spangler will draft such an amendment for review by the subcommittee at its next meeting.

8. Three-Year Policy Review

No action was taken on this agenda item.

9. Next meeting

August 24, 8 AM.

10. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Garballey, seconded by Mr. Thielman, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:12 PM.

Summary of action items

- Mr. Spangler to discuss the potential changes to policies BEDH and BDB with the Committee Chair.
- Mr. Thielman to draft an amended policy DBJ.
- Mr. Spangler to contact MASC for details of its online policy service, including cost.
- Mr. Spangler to draft amendment to Policy Review policy to formalize use and revision of policy calendar.
- Superintendent to report back on adherence to policy BDFE-Conduct of School Council Business.
- Superintendent to submit reports to School Committee at next regular meeting as required by policy JJ - Co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Mr. Spangler to check on status of any revision to policy BDFA-E-3- District-Wide Goal Setting and Performance Objective Process, reflecting change in due date from August 1 to October 1.
- Mr. Spangler to check with MASC to see if School Improvement Plan is required by state law. If not, he will create agenda item for next p&p mtg to discuss scrapping this policy.
- Mr. Spangler to create agenda items for next meeting to revise policies LBC-R and FA/FB/FBB.
- Mr. Spangler to revise policy calendar to reflect new dates in amended policy JFABA - FDK Fee.

Exhibit A

Proposed Amendments to Policy BEDH: *Public Participation At School Committee Meetings* (changes in **bold**, **blue** text)

In order to provide for full and open communication between the public (students, teachers, administrators and members of the

community) and the Arlington School Committee, the Committee authorizes several avenues for the exchange of information, ideas, and opinions. All of the following operate within the framework of the Committee's scheduled meetings.

1. Written correspondence may be directed to the Committee through its administrative secretary. Statements of two pages or less are encouraged.
2. At the beginning of each regular meeting of the Committee, **there will be a period of up to 20 minutes set aside for public participation. Citizens individuals or group representatives** may address the Committee on items of school business. **The length of the public participation segment shall normally be no more than 20 minutes, but may be extended by the Chairperson. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The Chairperson may permit extension of this time limit. The Committee may not respond directly to public comment, but will take comments and suggestions under advisement.**
3. A citizen who wishes to have an item placed on the agenda will present the request in writing to the administrative secretary. To be considered, the request must be received by noon of the day preceding the meeting.
4. From time to time, the School Committee may schedule a public hearing on any matter of concern to the community, including the annual budget.
5. Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the chairperson may terminate that individual's privilege of address.
6. All remarks will be addressed through the chairperson of the meeting.
7. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.
8. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the committee before or after the meeting for the committee members review and consideration at an appropriate time.

All meetings of the Committee shall be presided over by the Chairperson with the primary purpose of conducting the business of the Committee in a responsible and expeditious manner. The Chairperson shall have the authority to regulate and limit public participation within the provisions of this policy. The Committee may determine to limit or alter this authority by majority vote. However, by law, "no person shall address a public meeting of a governmental body without permission of the presiding officer at such meeting, and all persons shall, at the request of such presiding officer, be silent."

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 39:23C
CROSS REF.: BE, School Committee Meetings
Exhibit B

Proposed Amendments to Policy Policy BDB: *School Committee Officers*
(changes in **bold, blue** text)

Duties of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Arlington School Committee has the same powers as any other member of the committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. He/she will perform those duties that are consistent with his office and those required by law, state regulations, and this committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the chairperson will:

1. Sign, or cause to be signed when permissible, the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the committee
 2. Perform such duties as prescribed by action of the School Committee.
 3. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the committee's agendas
 4. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between committee meetings
5. Appoint all subcommittees and representatives to town committees when requested by other town officials, subject to approval by the School Committee
6. **Serve as liaison, or designate another committee member to serve as liaison between the School Committee and bodies not otherwise having formal School Committee representation including, but not limited to, the Finance Committee, the Board of Selectmen, and Town Meeting**
 - 7.6. Call special meetings of the committee as found necessary
- 8.7. Arrange for orientation of new Committee members by the Superintendent and his/her assistants within two weeks after the organizational meeting.
- 9.8. Be public spokesman for the committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others
- 10.9. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all committee meetings.

The chairperson shall also be responsible for ensuring the appropriate, timely and informative presentation of the annual school budget, as well as other issues pertinent to the schools, to Town Meeting.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the committee, the chairperson will:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time
2. Announce the business to come before the committee in its proper order
3. Enforce the committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the committee
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

The vice-chairperson of the committee will act in the absence of the chairperson as presiding officer of the committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him.

Secretary

The secretary will perform or cause to be performed the following:

- Keep an accurate journal of all committee meetings
- Comply with state law and committee policy regarding notification of meetings
- Render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:36

NOTE: The treasurer of the town serves as treasurer of the School Committee.